

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the subject application. The Office Action of October 31, 2003 has been received and contents carefully reviewed.

By this Amendment, Applicants amend claims 1 and 4. Accordingly, claims 1-30 are currently pending in the present application. Claims 6-30 have been withdrawn as the result of the earlier restriction requirement. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Anno et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,340,963). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 1 is allowable over the cited references in that claim 1 recites a combination of elements including, for example, "a common electrode intersecting the signal lines, thereby forming first and second signal-line portions... wherein the first and second electrostatic protecting circuits are substantially aligned with each other on opposite side of the common line." None of the cited references, singly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least this feature of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 and claims 2-3, which depend therefrom, are allowable over the cited references.

Claim 4 is allowable over the cited references in that claim 4 recites a combination of elements including, for example, "a common electrode intersecting the signal lines, thereby forming first and second signal-line portions... wherein the first and second electrostatic protecting circuits are substantially aligned with each other on opposite side of the common line." None of the cited references, singly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least this feature of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 4 and claim 5, which depend therefrom, are allowable over the cited references.

Applicants believe the foregoing amendments place the application in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner deems that a telephone conference would further the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited

to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number (202) 496 - 7500. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911.

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Respectfully submitted,

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